White Paper on Consumer Affairs 2025

FY2024 Implementation of Consumer Policy

FY2024 Report on the Results of Consolidation and Analysis of Information about Actual or Potential Consumer-Related Incidents

[Summary]

Consumer Affairs Agency

2025 White Paper on Consumer Affairs: Table of Contents

(FY2024 Implementation of Consumer Policy; Report on the Results of Consolidation and Analysis of Information about Actual or Potential Consumer-Related Incidents)

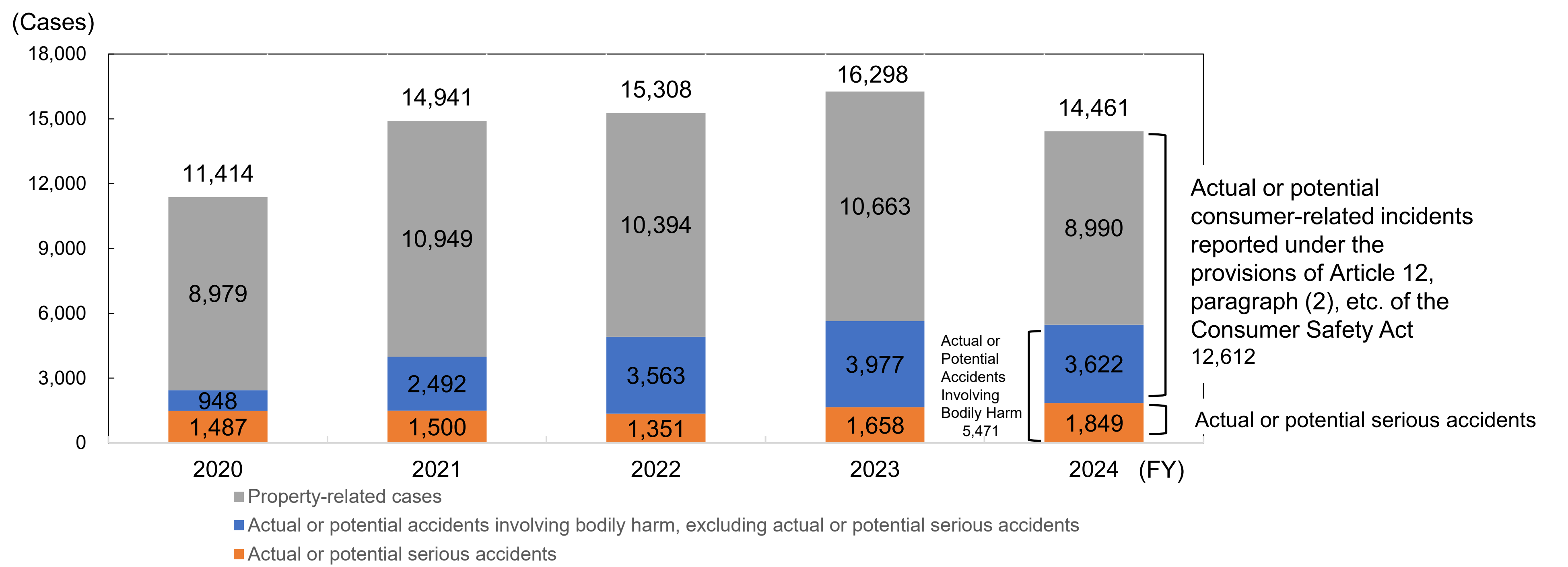
Part 1: Trend in consumer issues and consumer attitude/behavior

Part 2: Implementation of consumer policies

・In this document, the contents and the number of consumer affairs consultations registered with PIO-NET are as of March 31, 2025. Since it takes a certain amount of time from the receipt of consultation cases at local consumer affairs centers to registration with PIO-NET, the number of consultation cases in this document may slightly increase in the future.

- The number of actual or potential consumer-related incidents reported to the Consumer Affairs Agency in FY2024 was 14,461.
- The breakdown is as follows: 1,849 cases were Actual or Potential Serious Accidents reported under the provisions of Article 12, paragraph (1), etc. of the Consumer Safety Act, and 12,612 cases were actual or potential consumer-related incidents reported under the provisions of Article 12, paragraph (2), etc. of the same Act.
- Among these cases, the number of Actual or Potential Accidents Involving Bodily Harm was 5,471, and the number of property-related cases was 8,990.

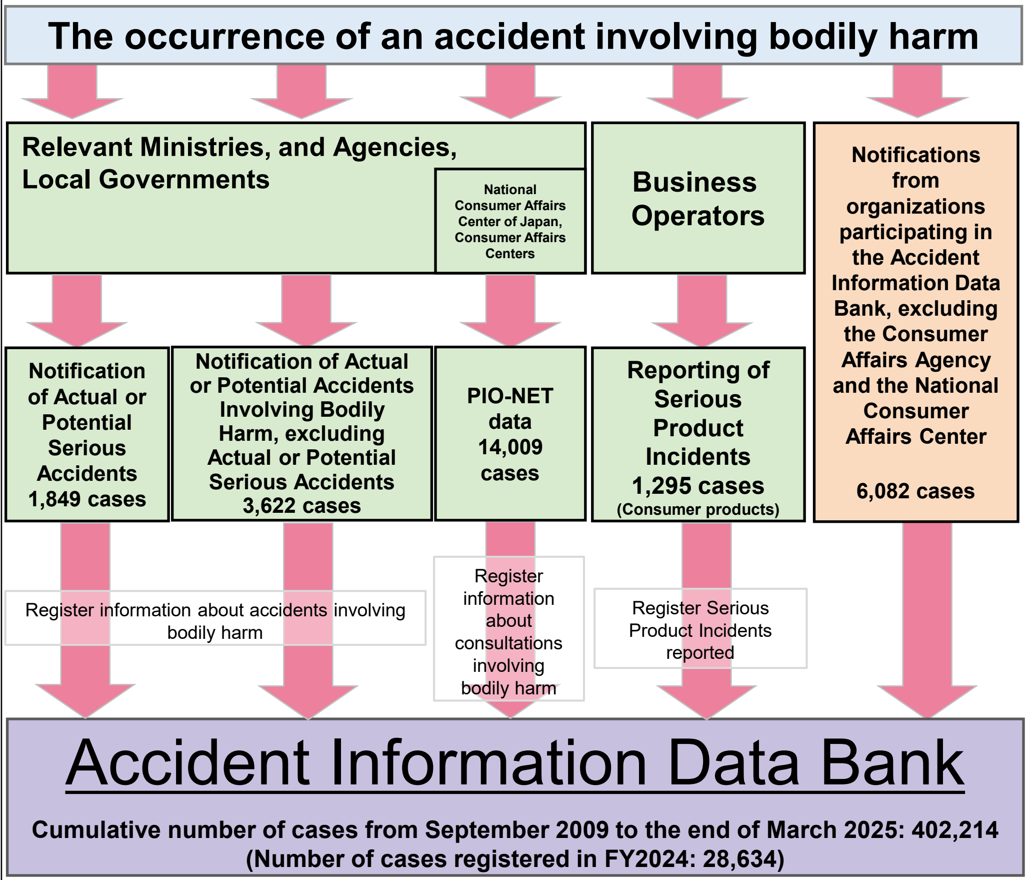
Diagram 1-1: The number of actual or potential consumer-related incidents reported to the Consumer Affairs Agency under the Consumer Safety Act



(Notes) 1. The number of actual or potential consumer-related incidents reported by the heads of administrative organs, prefectural governors, mayors of municipalities, or the president of the National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan to the Consumer Affairs Agency under the provisions of the Consumer Safety Act.
2. “Actual or Potential Serious Accidents” refer to those reported under the provisions of Article 12, paragraph (1), etc. of the Consumer Safety Act.
3. From June 2021, it became mandatory to report the recall of foods due to the amendments of the Food Sanitation Act and the Food Labelling Act.

- The Consumer Affairs Agency analyzes accident information involving bodily harm consolidated in the Accident Information Data Bank, and uses the findings to enhance consumer safety measures.
- Based on notifications of consumer accidents, the Consumer Affairs Agency issues alerts to prevent instances of harm to consumers from occurring or increasing.

Diagram 1-2: Consolidation of accident information involving bodily harm



(Notes) 1. The number of Actual or Potential Accidents Involving Bodily Harm (including Actual or Potential Serious Accidents) and Serious Product Incidents refers to the number of cases notified or reported in FY2024. The PIO-NET data represents the number of consultations received in FY2024 and registered in PIO-NET by March 31, 2025. Since a single case may be reported by multiple organizations and a certain amount of time is required before a case is registered in the Accident Information Data Bank, the cumulative number of cases and the number of registered cases do not necessarily match when totaled.
2. Other institutions participating in the Medical Institution Network also provide accident information to the Consumer Affairs Agency.

Diagram 1-3: Major property-related cases in FY2024 where consumer alerts were issued based on the Consumer Safety Act

Scheme	Specific examples
A scheme that misleads victims into believing they can make money easily (7 cases)	Consumers applied for high-paying side jobs with a high application fee. Once at work, their performance was criticized, and a penalty was charged. They were supposed to be reimbursed after these payments, but it never happened. They kept paying more money rather than earning.
A scheme in which consumers are deceived into sending money via a code payment service instead of receiving a refund (4 cases)	After consumers ordered products online, the seller falsely claimed that the items were out of stock and the payment would be refunded. Yet, the seller deceived consumers into sending more money via a code payment service.
Charging higher fees than those indicated on the website (3 cases)	Consumers saw advertisements such as “Basic fee: from 3,980 yen (tax included)” and “Lowest price in the industry” on the website of a road service provider and assumed they could use the service at a fair and low cost. However, they were charged an unreasonably high fee after the actual work performed.
Fake website (2 cases)	A deceptive business operator used fake websites with famous brand logos and other identifiers to mislead consumers into believing that they were purchasing genuine products, such as healthcare or audio home appliances, and induced them to buy items that were either unrelated to the actual brand or counterfeit.

・The number of consumer affairs consultations in 2024 was approximately 900,000, slightly decreased from the previous year. In recent years, the number remains around 900,000 per year.

・By product/service type, the type "Goods in general," which includes spam e-mails and suspicious phone calls, accounted for the largest number of consultations.

Next in number are consultations concerning "real estate leases," with some cases involving high penalties or repair charges upon termination of the contract.

Diagram 1-4: Transition in the number of consumer affairs consultations

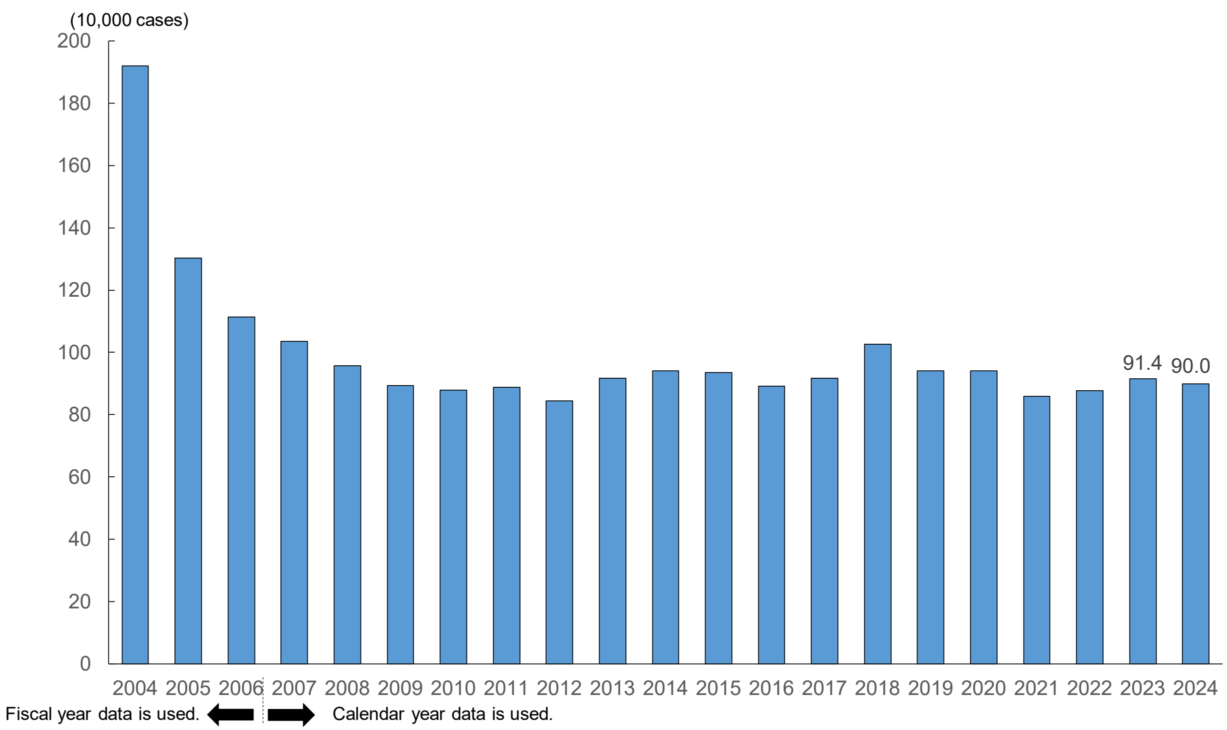


Diagram 1-5:
Top 10 product/service types in terms of the number of consumer affairs consultations (2024)

Rank	Total	
	Products/services	Number of cases
	Total number of cases	899,708
1	Goods in general (e.g., spam e-mails and suspicious phone calls)	99,509
2	Real estate lease	39,653
3	Other health food	33,541
4	Skin-care products	31,177
5	Work & construction	29,945
6	Other services	26,652
7	Multi-purpose loan/consumer loan	20,318
8	Internet connection service	19,773
9	Mobile phone service	17,698
10	Repair services	17,262

(Note) All the diagrams are created based on consumer affairs consultation data registered with PIO-NET (up to March 31, 2025).

- The number of consumer affairs consultations by elderly persons in 2024 was approximately 298,000, increased from the previous year. In recent years, the percentage of consultations by elderly persons remains around 30% of all consultations.
- Elderly persons with dementia and related disorders tend to be less aware that they are in trouble, resulting in issues being less noticeable.

  ⇒ It is particularly important for those around them to keep a close watch.

Diagram 1-6: Transition in the number of consumer affairs consultations by elderly persons

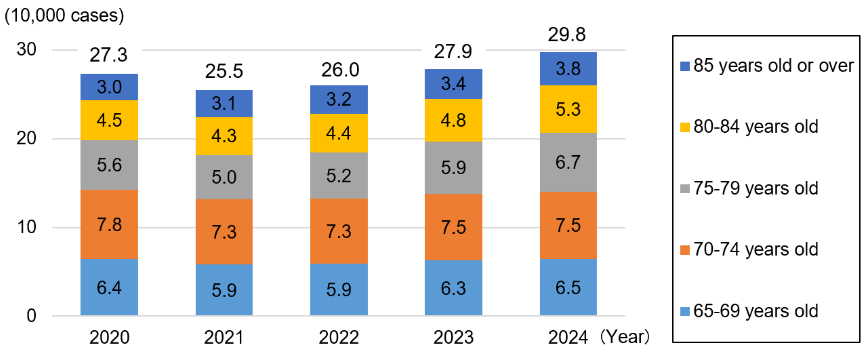
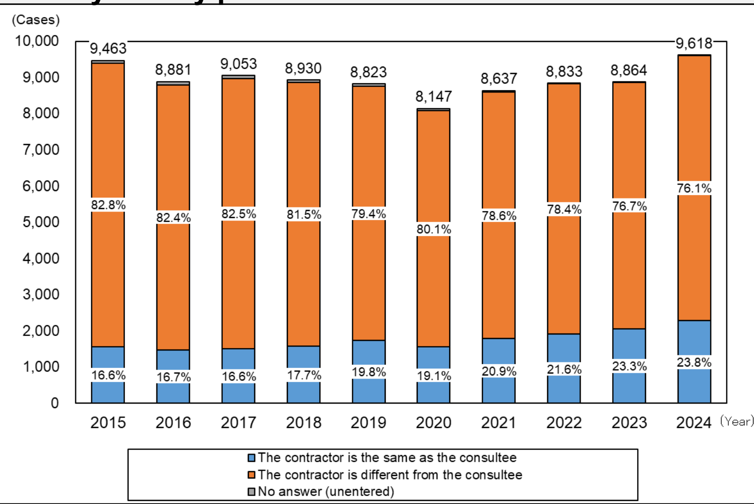


Diagram 1-7: Transition in the number of consumer affairs consultations by elderly persons with dementia and other disorders



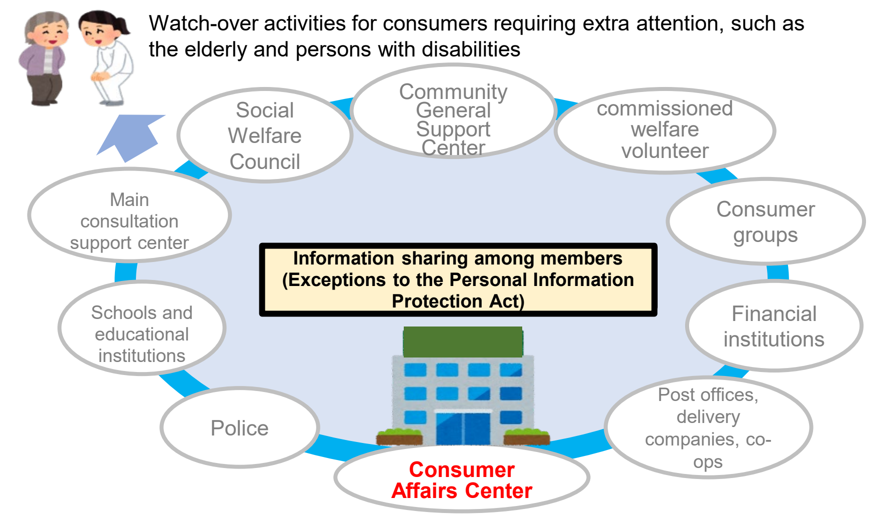
(Reference) Diagram 1-8: Promotion of watch-over activities for consumers requiring extra attention

It is important not only to wait for consumers to seek consultation, but also to establish a system that refers them to Consumer Affairs Centers through daily community monitoring efforts in collaboration with various stakeholders.

Community-based watch-over network
(Local Council for Ensuring the Safety of Consumers)
→ Established in 542 local municipalities nationwide
(as of the end of March 2025)

⇒ Three major functions

1. **Deliver information** to consumers and **call for attention;**
2. **Identify unusual signs** in consumers while at work; and
3. If any unusual signs are identified, **refer them** to the appropriate consultation service (**Consumer Affairs Center**).



(Note) 1. Diagrams 1-6 and 1-7 are created based on consumer affairs consultation data registered with PIO-NET (up to March 31, 2025).
2. Other disorders includes mental disorders, intellectual disabilities and other age-related diseases, as well as conditions in which sound judgement cannot be made for any reason.

・The number of consultations on the "subscription" types of mail order sales decreased from the previous year to 89,893 in 2024. By age group, individuals aged 40 and over accounted for a relatively high proportion of the total. Upon examining top categories by product and service, many of the consultations were related to health foods and cosmetics.

Diagram 1-9: Transition in the number of consumer affairs consultations related to "subscription"

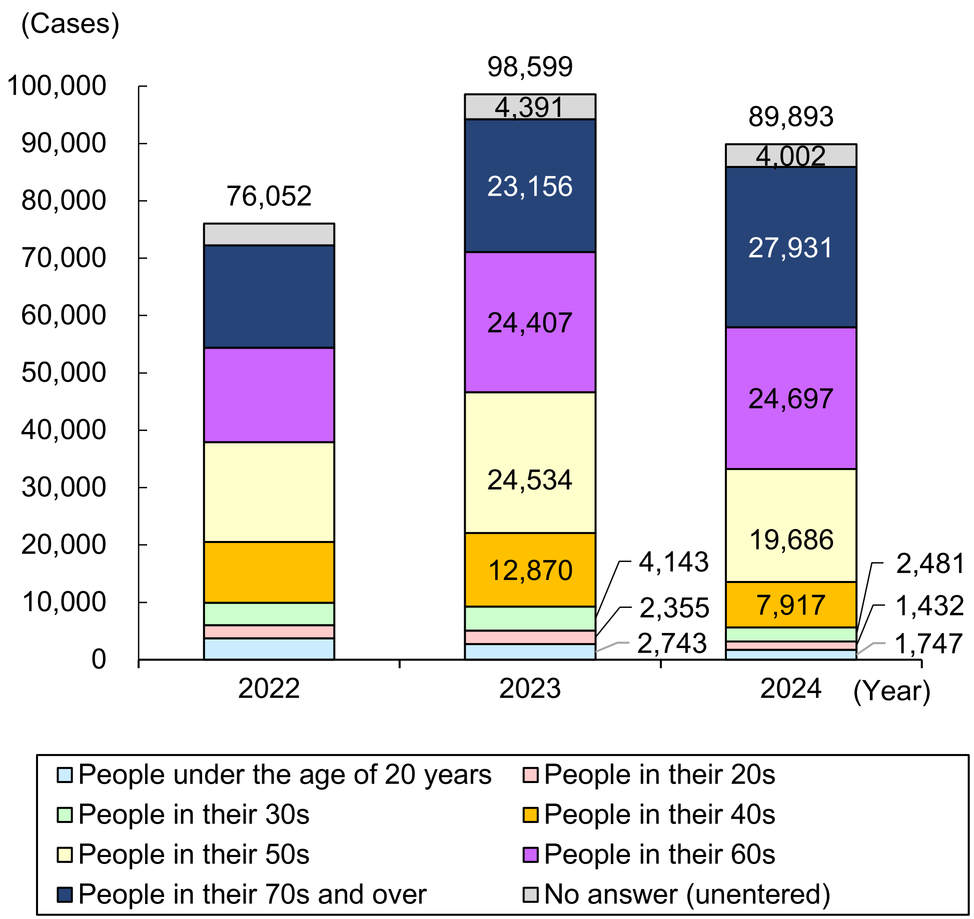


Diagram 1-10: Top 5 product/service types in terms of the number of consumer affairs consultations related to "subscription" (2024)

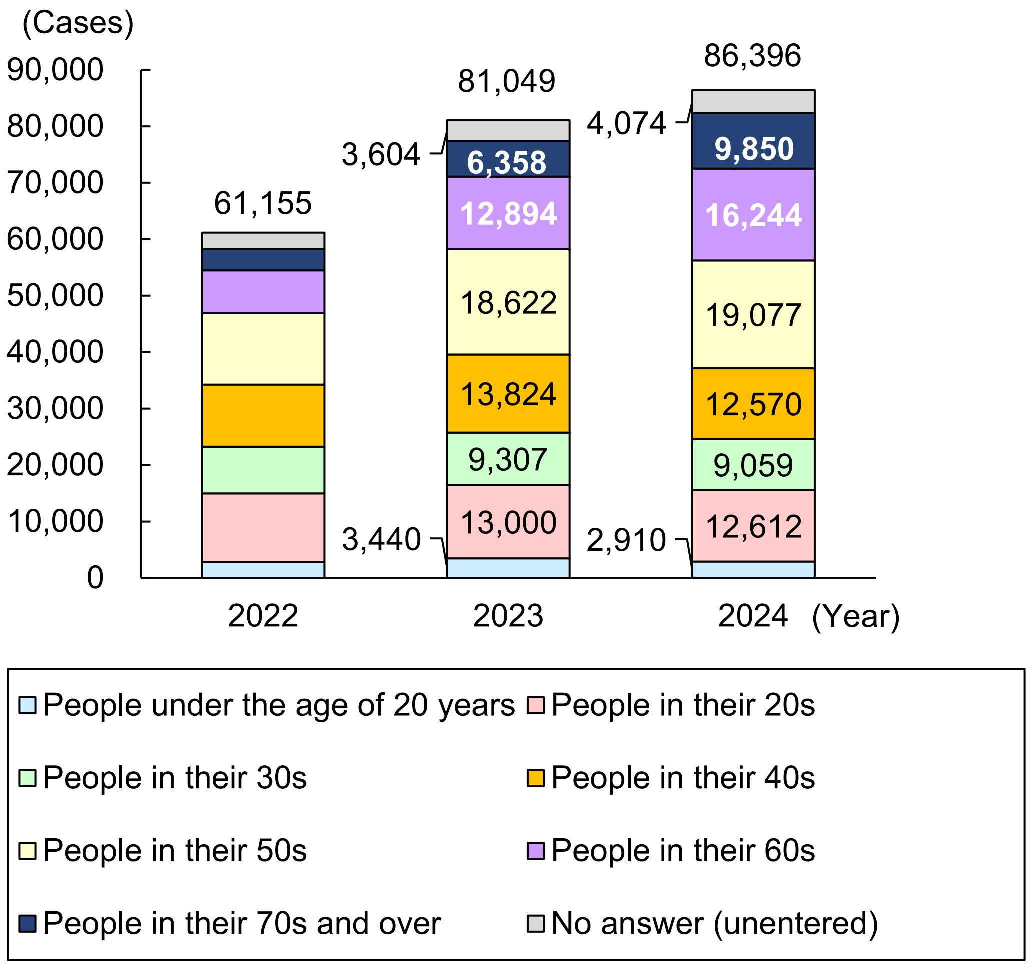
Rank	Products/services	Number of cases	Ratio
1	Other health food	24,715	27.5%
2	Face cream	15,872	17.7%
3	Milky lotion	8,267	9.2%
4	Make-up Foundation	4,700	5.2%
5	Toothpaste	3,802	4.2%

Yellow-green :Health food　Pink :Cosmetics

(Note) All the diagrams are created based on consumer affairs consultations registered with PIO-NET (up to March 31, 2025).

・The number of consultations related to social media increased from the previous year to 86,396 in 2024. While consultations are received from a wide range of age groups, those aged 40 and over tend to occupy relatively high proportion.

Diagram 1-11: Transition in the number of consumer affairs consultations related to social media



(Reference) Response by the Consumer Affairs Agency to cases triggered by social media

- Administrative disposition against mail order sales
  [Relevant Products/Services]: Diet food and others
  [Date of Disposition]: March 14, 2025
  [Summary]: Misleading advertising, breach of duty to indicate necessary information on the final confirmation screen, and misleading indication on the final confirmation screen (under the Act on Specified Commercial Transactions)
  [Details of Response]: Six-month business suspension order and instructions; six-month business prohibition order against the CEO

- Alert about businesses falsely claiming to offer rewards for “task-based side jobs” while requiring consumers to make large payments
  [Relevant Products/Services]: Home-based piecework, side job
  [Date of Orders]: February 6, 2025
  [Summary]: Deceptive practices against consumers, such as luring them via social media ads into lucrative task-based side jobs that require a large participation fee, and subsequently inducing them to make additional large payments under the pretext of covering expenses for correcting errors in their work. (Consumer Safety Act)
  [Details of Response]: Publication of information that contributes to the prevention of instances of harm to consumers from occurring or increasing, with the aim of alerting consumers

(Note) Created based on the consumer affairs consultation data registered with PIO-NET (up to March 31, 2025).

Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 5: Consumer harm and problems experienced and Estimated amount of financial detriment

- Consumer financial detriment amount in 2024 was estimated to be approximately 9.0 trillion yen (payments made (including credits granted)), increased from the previous year.
- This increase is attributable to the rise in both the average payment made per case and the estimated number of cases involving damages of 10,000 yen or more.
  - ∟ The amount paid increased in the “finance and insurance” and other areas, while the number of cases increased in areas such as “foods,” “household goods,” and “health services,” including the hair removal esthetic service.

*With regard to this estimate, a follow-up meeting of the “Study Group on the Development of Quantitative Indicators Related to Harm to Consumers” was held in December 2024. To prevent a small number of cases with large amount of damage from disproportionately affecting the entire estimate, the estimation method was partially revised to employ data to enable reasonably accurate calculation of occurrence probabilities. Under the revised estimation method, consumer financial detriment is estimated using consultation data involving less than 100 million yen. For cases involving 100 million yen or more, where accurate occurrence probabilities cannot be derived from the Basic Survey on Consumer Life, only the number of cases and the total amount are reported.

Diagram 1-12: Estimated results of consumer financial detriment amount

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Contract/Purchase value	About 4.6 trillion yen	About 6.9 trillion yen	About 7.5 trillion yen	About 9.4 trillion yen	About 10.9 trillion yen
Payment made (including credit granted)	About 3.6 trillion yen	About 5.6 trillion yen	About 6.0 trillion yen	About 7.9 trillion yen	About 9.0 trillion yen

(Remarks) 1. Consumer financial detriment amount is the total amount of payments made for products and services related to consumer harm and problems.
2. “Payment made (including credit granted)” means the sum of payments already made and future payments to be made with credit cards, etc.
3. Estimated amount is calculated by multiplying the population aged 15 and over by the “probability of occurrence” of consumer harm and problems that is estimated from the results of the “Basic Survey on Consumer Life” (the probability obtained by dividing the number of cases in which survey respondents have experienced consumer harm and problems by the number of valid responses), and multiplying the obtained value by the average amount of damage per incident, which is calculated from consumer affairs consultation information, and then adding the amount estimated to be potential damage among elderly people to adjust the result.
4. Note that since the awareness survey used for the estimation is based on consumer awareness, the perspective on consumer harm and problems may differ among the respondents, and the survey may include errors due to its nature.
5. Consultation cases of 100 million yen or more are listed below.
[Contract/Purchase value]
2020: 91 cases (14.3 billion yen in total); 2021: 59 cases (11.8 billion yen in total); 2022: 86 cases (28.4 billion yen in total);
2023: 117 cases (31.3 billion yen in total); 2024: 125 cases (21.2 billion yen in total)
[Payment made (including credit granted)]
2020: 44 cases (6.8 billion yen in total); 2021: 26 cases (4.9 billion yen in total); 2022: 52 cases (12.0 billion yen in total);
2023: 62 cases (20.5 billion yen in total); 2024: 70 cases (11.6 billion yen in total)

[Reference] Estimated results of consumer financial detriment amount based on the previous method

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Contract/Purchase value	About 5.0 trillion yen	About 7.3 trillion yen	About 8.4 trillion yen	About 10.6 trillion yen	About 11.8 trillion yen
Payment made (including credit granted)	About 3.8 trillion yen	About 5.9 trillion yen	About 6.5 trillion yen	About 8.8 trillion yen	About 9.6 trillion yen

[Feature] Part 1, Chapter 2: Green-Oriented Consumer Behavior
– Changing our lives and the global environment through conscious consumption –

○ Given the urgency of environmental issues, **consumers are expected to actively participate in building a sustainable society, recognizing that their consumer behavior can influence the future economy, society, and global environment.**

○ On the other hand, although consumers' awareness of environmental issues has increased, **a portion of them currently practice environmentally conscious consumer behavior.**

Current challenges and initiatives to address environmental issues

- Current status of environmental issues

● Summary of environmental issues that have become more common, such as rising temperatures and increased heavy rainfall, and the current situation in Japan.

- A wide variety of initiatives to address environmental issues

● Introduction of government and corporate initiatives

Analysis of consumer awareness and behavior on environmental issues

- Analysis of consumer awareness and behavior on environmental issues

- Awareness and practice of environmentally conscious consumer behavior

- Key factors considered important for encouraging changes in consumer behavior

Challenges and future directions for encouraging changes in consumer behavior toward the realization of a sustainable society

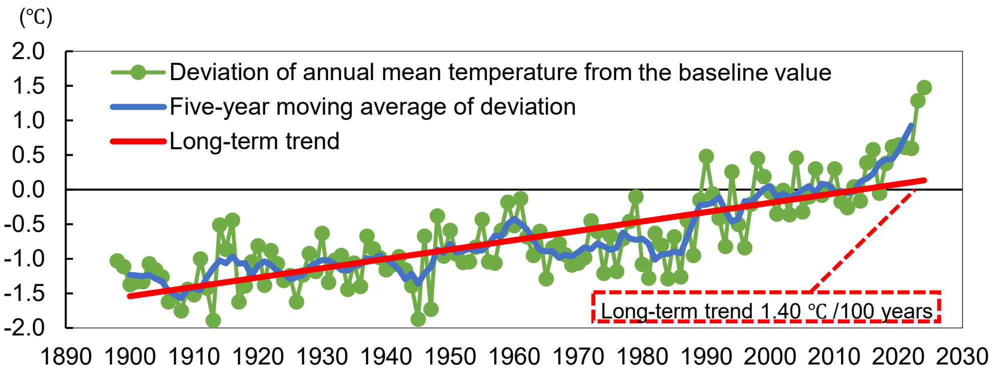
<Common Environmental Issues>

○ Global warming has progressed in recent years, with Japan's average annual temperature increasing at a rate of 1.40℃ per century.

○ In Tokyo, the number of years with more than 10 extremely hot days was only once before 2000 —in 1995— but increased to eight times between 2001 and 2023.

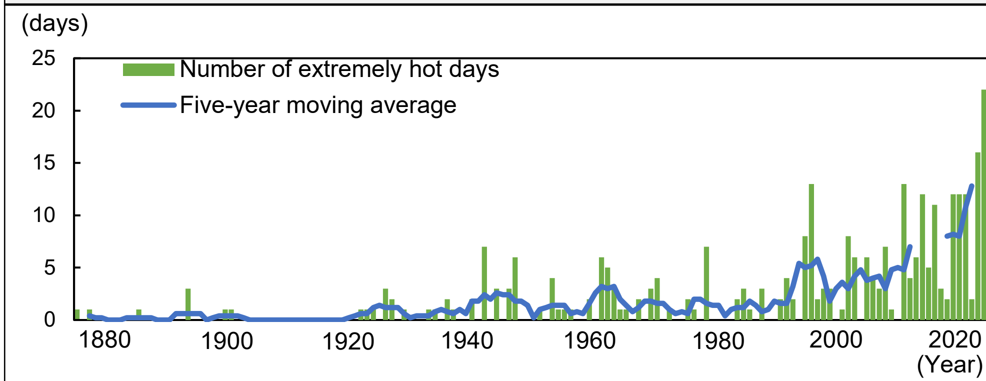
○ In terms of precipitation, the number of heavy rainfall days[*1] is increasing, while the number of rainy days[*2] is decreasing, indicating that rainfall pattern is becoming more extreme.

Diagram 2-1: Chronological changes of annual mean temperature anomalies in Japan



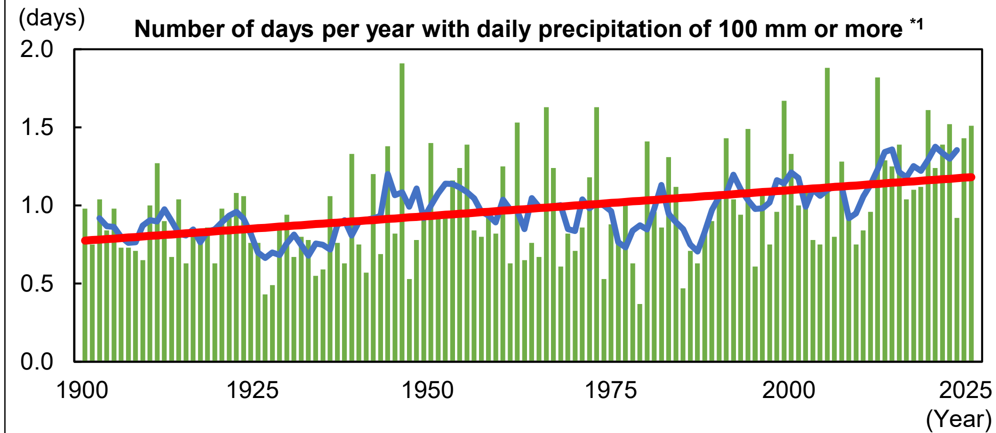
*The graph shows the deviation of each year's average temperature from the baseline value (the 30-year average from 1991 to 2020).

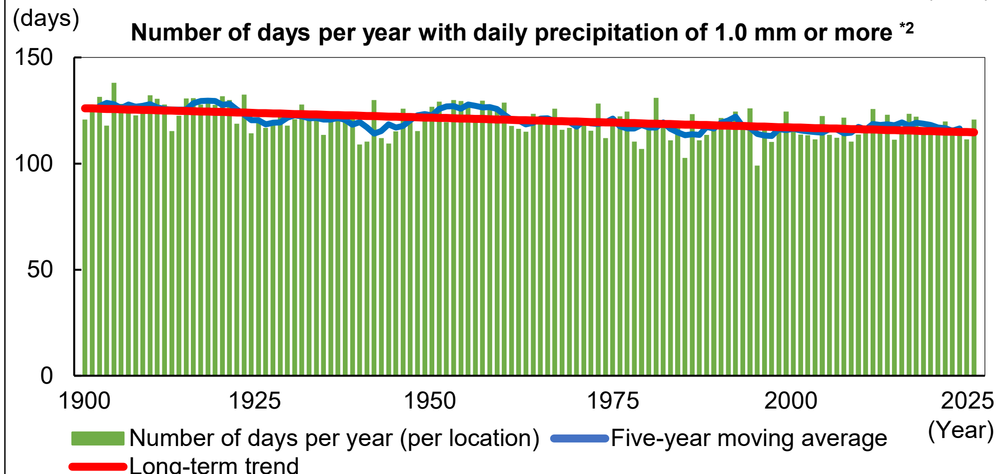
Diagram 2-2: Trend in the number of extremely hot days per year in Tokyo



*The 5-year moving averages before and after 2014 are not shown, as the data for that period are not consistent due to a change in observation sites.

Diagram 2-3: Annual trends of daily precipitation at 51 locations nationwide





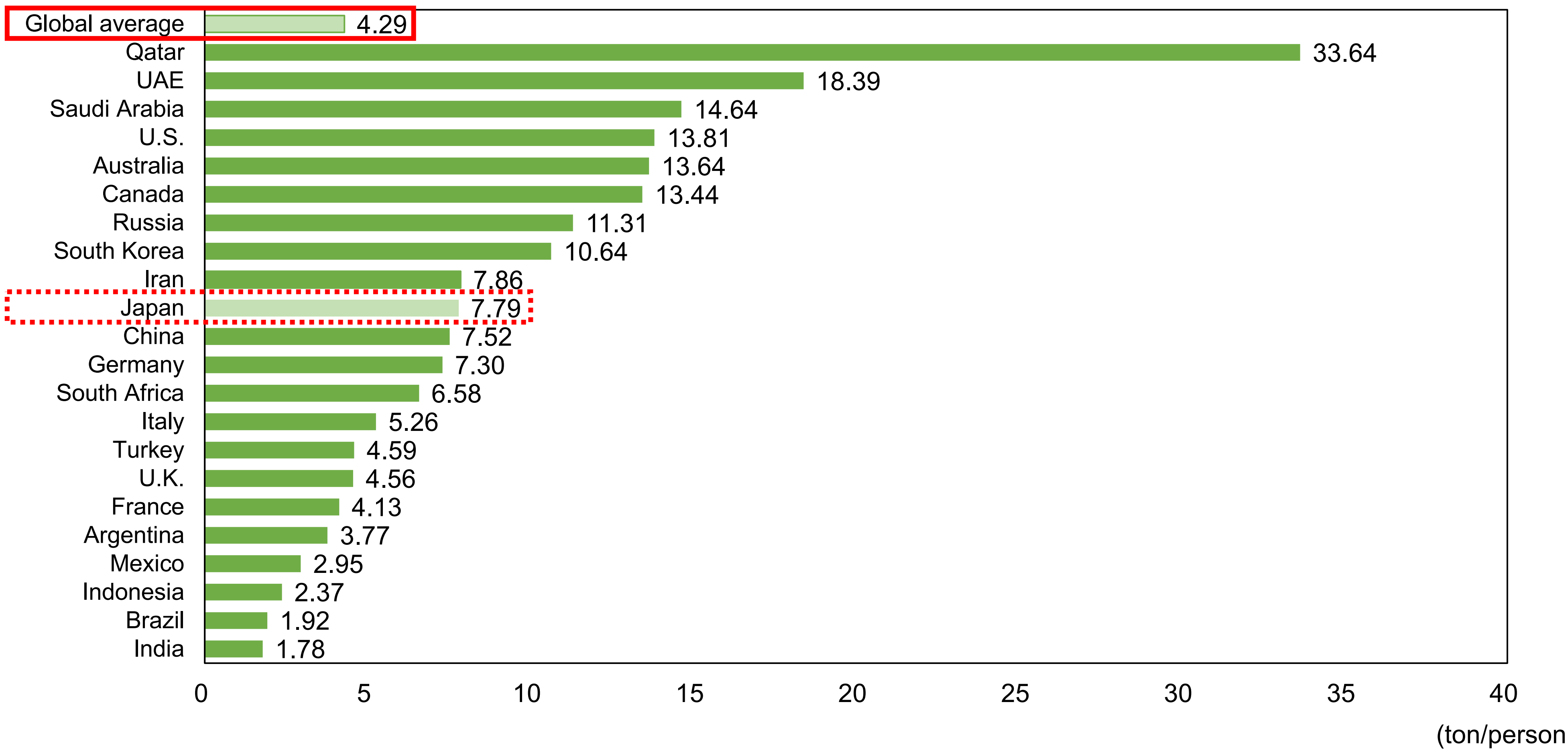
(Note) Diagram 2-1: Compiled based on data from "Secular Changes of Annual Mean Temperature Anomalies in Japan" (1898–2024) by the Japan Meteorological Agency.
Diagram 2-2: Compiled based on data from the Japan Meteorological Agency's "Long-term Changes in the Number of Extremely Hot Days in Major Cities," specifically the "Number of Extremely Hot Days in Tokyo" section.
Diagram 2-3: Compiled based on the "Climate Change Monitoring Report" by the Japan Meteorological Agency. Changes over time from 1901 to 2024.

<Environmental Issues and Current Status in Japan>

◯ In terms of per capita energy-related CO_2 emissions by country, Japan emits about twice the global average.

◯ Although Japan's greenhouse gas emissions have shown a declining trend in recent years, global emissions continue to increase.

Diagram 2-4: Energy-related CO_2 emissions per capita by major countries (2022)



(Note) Compiled based on "Global CO_2 Emissions from Energy Sources" (2022), Ministry of the Environment, Japan.

<Examples of Initiatives to Address Environmental Issues>

◯ With various initiatives implemented by the public and private sectors, CO_2 emissions have been decreasing in industrial and transportation sectors, while remaining flat or slightly increasing in the household sector.

→ **In addition to efforts by public and private sectors, cooperation from consumers through environmentally conscious consumer behavior is also essential.**

Diagram 2-5: Public and private sector initiatives to address environmental issues

<Public Sector>

・Development of government policy toward the realization of a decarbonized society (METI: GX2040 Vision)

・Encouragement of environmentally conscious corporate activities (MLIT: The "Eco Rail Mark" system)

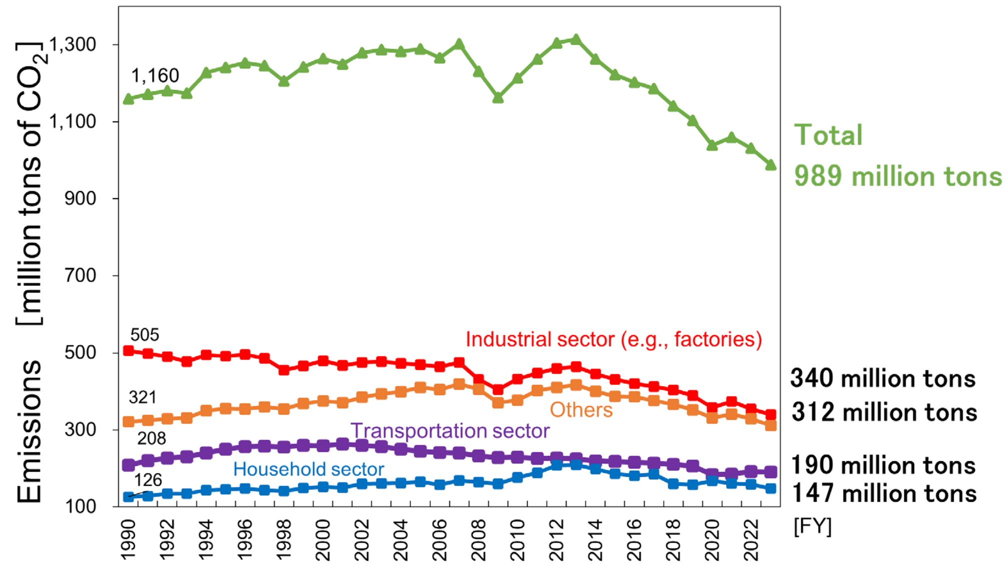
・Promotion of national movements that lead to decarbonization (MOE: "Decokatsu") , etc.

<Private Sector>

・Reduction of CO_2 emissions in product development and manufacturing processes

・Wider adoption of renewable energy and other related measures

Diagram 2-6: CO_2 emission trend (by sector)



<Corporate Awareness in Promoting Environmentally Conscious Initiatives

(Compiled based on the Consumer Affairs Agency's "1st Working Team on Green-Oriented Consumer Behavior" (2024)) >

・The motives behind their initiatives include: "enhancing corporate brand value," "investment for the future (such as technological development)," and "regulatory compliance."

・Challenges faced by corporations in implementing initiatives:
Simply adopting environmentally conscious practices is not sufficient for consumers to perceive added value, making it difficult to directly translate such efforts into increased corporate profits.

(Note) Diagram 2-6: Compiled based on "Japan's National Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Removals in FY 2023," Ministry of the Environment, Japan.

Various topics that require supplementary analysis are introduced as columns.

Trends in international discussions on environmentally conscious consumer behavior

-In October 2024, the first OECD Consumer Policy Ministerial Meeting was held in Paris, France. 55 countries and regions, including Japan, participated under the theme "Consumers at the Centre of the Digital and Green Transitions."

-The Ministerial Declaration noted that many consumers are "concerned" about environmental issues, and that they can incentivize companies and encourage markets to offer more sustainable choices.

-In addressing environmental issues, it is essential to protect consumers from deceptive information and to ensure a fair and competitive environment for responsible businesses.

Environmental initiatives implemented and challenges faced by various companies

-In the retail sector, which frequently interacts with consumers, companies are undertaking various initiatives to encourage consumer engagement, for example, by clearly indicating which products are environmentally friendly.

-Corporations have also made efforts to help consumers find satisfaction, such as fun, enjoyment, or a sense of being cool, through purchasing products and other activities, thereby making environmentally conscious consumption easier and more enjoyable. For example, the "Decarbo Score" presents the reduction in CO_2 emissions during product manufacturing in an intuitively easy-to-understand format, such as "X% off," to spark consumer interest, encourage purchases, and raise awareness of environmental issues.

Learn about the "SUSTAINABLE LABELS" and use them as a criterion for selecting products.

Manami Yamaguchi, Representative Director, JAPAN SUSTAINABLE LABELS ASSOCIATION (General Incorporated Association)

-"SUSTAINABLE LABELS" collectively refers to international certification labels that indicate a product's consideration for the environment, people, and society, with the aim of raising public awareness.

-These labels simply serve as a tool to provide consumers with accurate information, helping them confidently choose products that are environmentally and socially responsible. While aiming for a society that does not solely rely on labels, effectively using them can help create a more sustainable society where consumers and businesses can find it easier to purchase and sell products that are environmentally and socially conscious.

Examples of SUSTAINABLE LABELS

MSC certification　RSPO Certification

[Feature] Part 1, Chapter 2, Section 2: Analysis of Consumer Awareness and Behavior on Environmental Issues
(1) Analysis of Consumer Awareness and Behavior on Environmental issues

◯ About 80% of consumers express interest in environmental issues, and about 70% are consciously aware of the problems.

◯ About 70% of consumers identified “the public” as an important actor in addressing environmental issues, and about half said they have considered taking action to help solve them.

→A high level of interest and concern about environmental issues was observed, along with a certain level of willingness to take action toward their resolution.

Diagram 2-7: Levels of interest in environmental issues

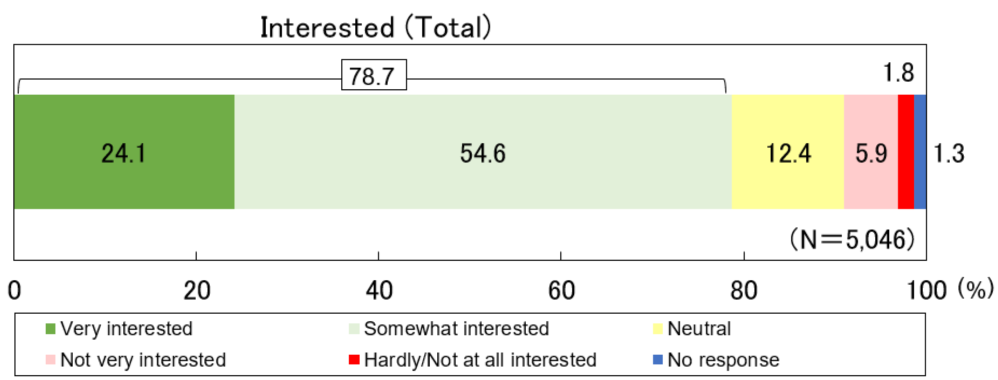


Diagram 2-9: Important actors in addressing environmental issues

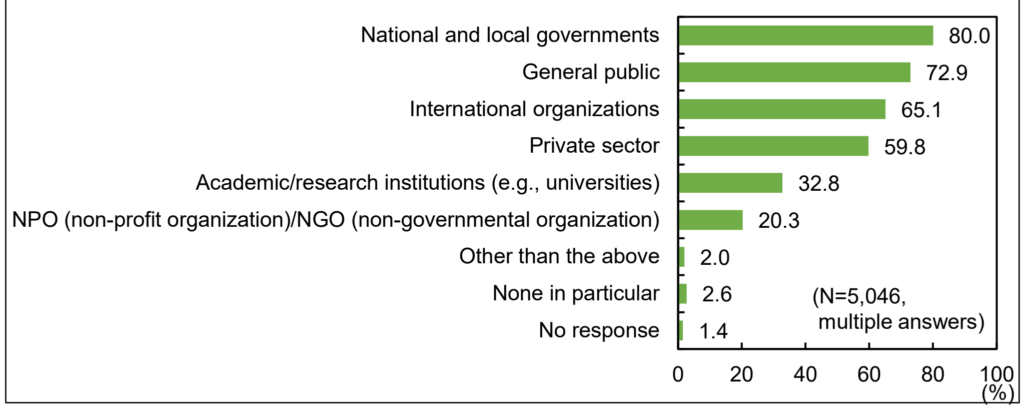


Diagram 2-8: Levels of awareness of environmental issues

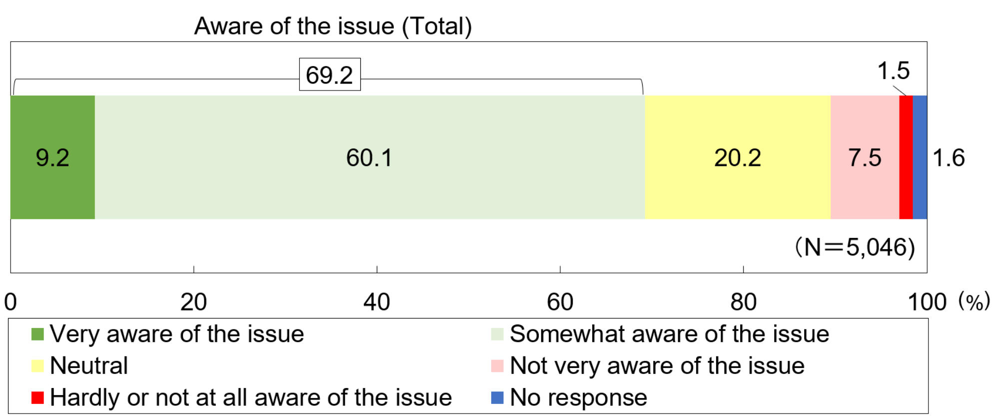
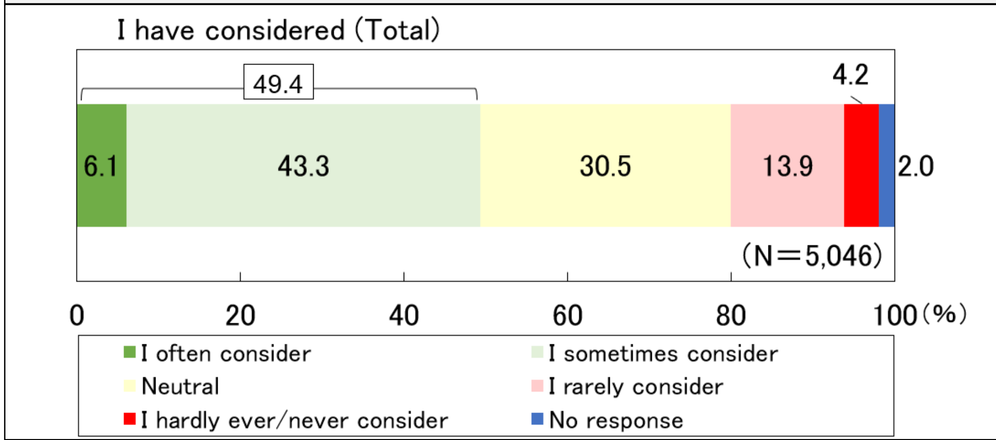


Diagram 2-10: Have you ever considered taking action to solve environmental issues?



(Note) All the diagrams are prepared based on the “Basic Survey on Consumer Life” (FY2024) of the Consumer Affairs Agency.

(2) Awareness and Practice of Environmentally Conscious Consumer Behavior

○ Initiatives related to the “3Rs (reduce, reuse, and recycle)” ranked high, with over 70% of respondents engaging in activities such as sorting waste, using items for a longer time, reducing food loss and waste, and minimizing the use of disposable products.
→ **On the other hand, only 10% to 30% of respondents choose eco-friendly products.**
Furthermore, respondents felt that choosing eco-friendly products contributes less to addressing environmental issues than 3R-related initiatives.

○ More than half of the respondents who did not purchase eco-friendly products said it was because they didn’t know which ones were eco-friendly.
→ **The biggest reason for not purchasing eco-friendly products is that consumers do not know which ones are.**

Diagram 2-11: Environmentally conscious practices in your daily life / Practices that you feel have contributed to solving environmental issues

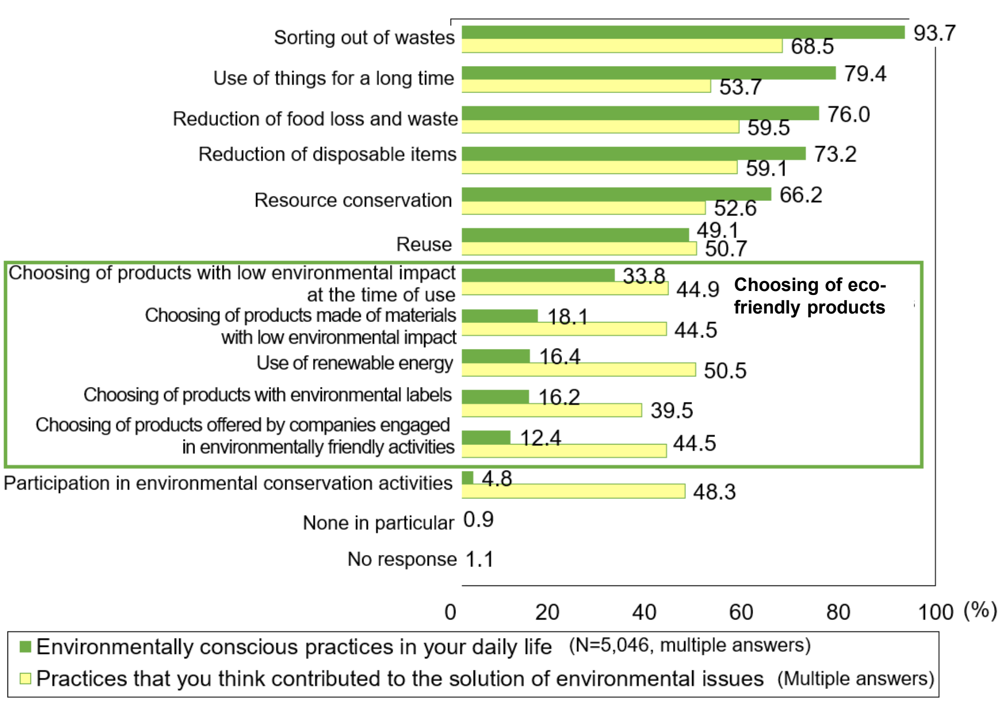


Diagram 2-12: Reasons for not purchasing eco-friendly products

* In response to the question - ‘To what extent do you actively purchase eco-friendly products and services in your daily life?’, this question was only asked to those who answered ‘not very much’ or ‘hardly at all or don’t know’ on a four-point scale.

(Note) All the diagrams are prepared based on the “Basic Survey on Consumer Life” (FY2024) of the Consumer Affairs Agency.

(3) Key Factors Considered Important for Encouraging Changes in Consumer Behavior

- ◯ The more people are concerned about environmental issues and recognize the impact of their consumer behavior, the more likely they are to purchase eco-friendly products.
- ◯ About 90% of purchasers of eco-friendly products cited reasons related to their environmental awareness. About 5% of respondents cited “cost-of-living savings” as their sole reason.

→It is important to foster “awareness of environmental considerations,” including interest, concern, and recognition of the impact of consumption behavior.

Diagram 2-13: Level of interest in and awareness of environmental issues, recognition of the impact of consumer behavior, and frequency of purchasing eco-friendly products

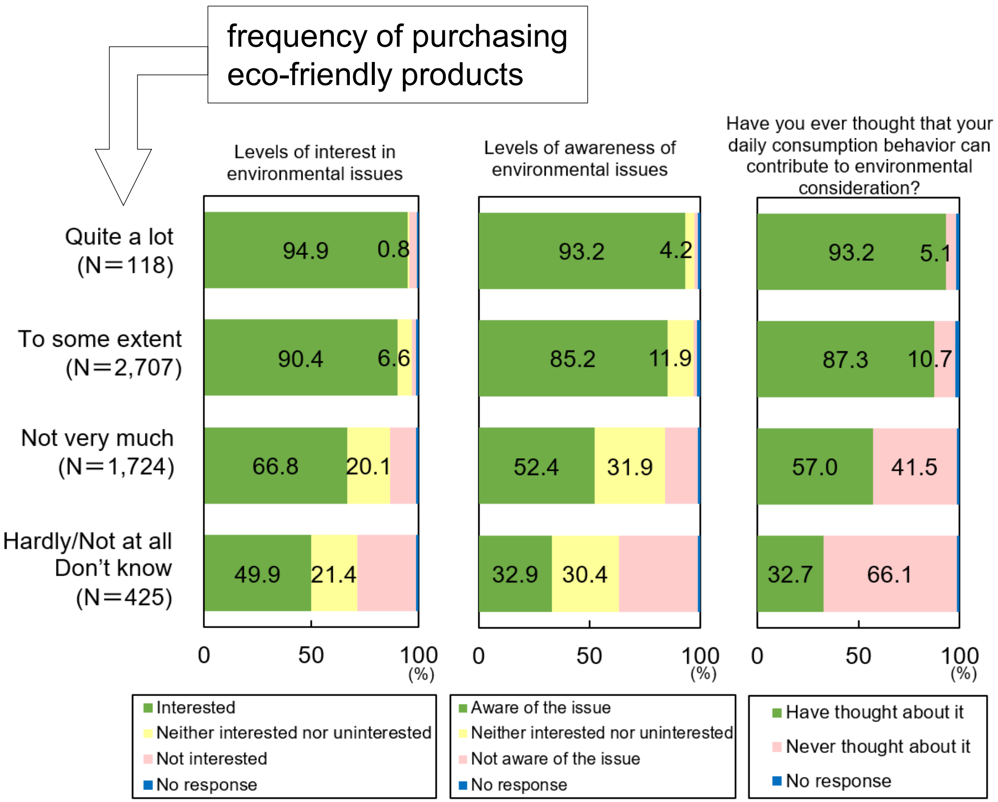
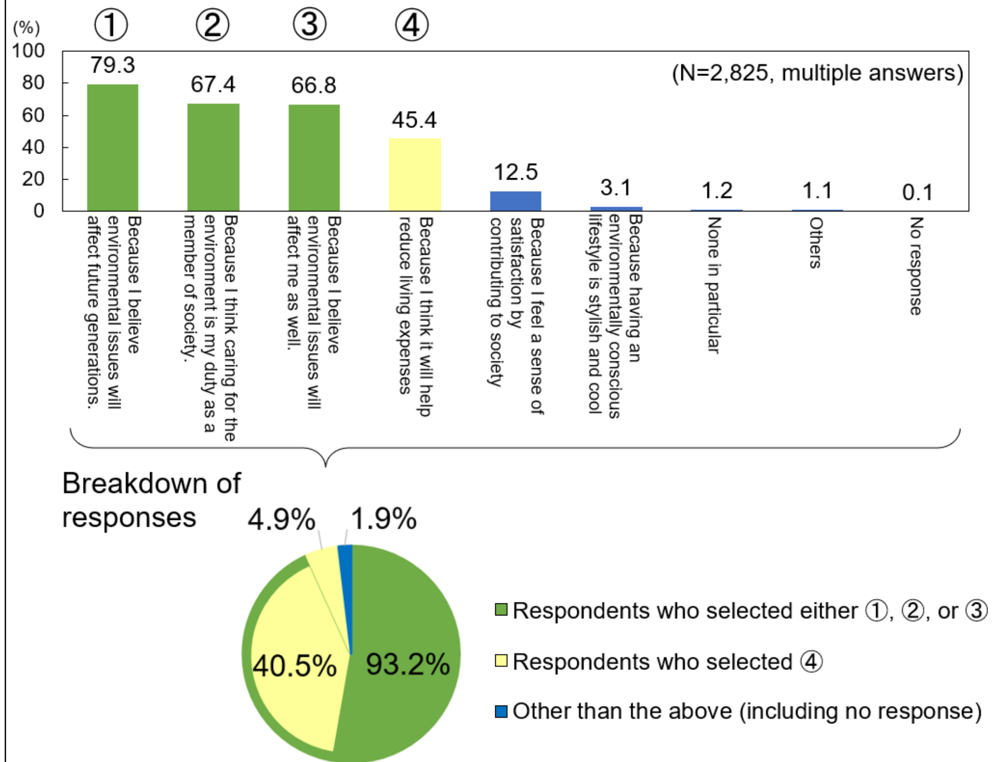


Diagram 2-14: Reasons for purchasing eco-friendly products



* In response to the question - ‘To what extent do you actively purchase eco-friendly products and services in your daily life?’, this question was only asked to those who answered ‘not very much‘ or ‘hardly at all or don’t know’ on a four-point scale.

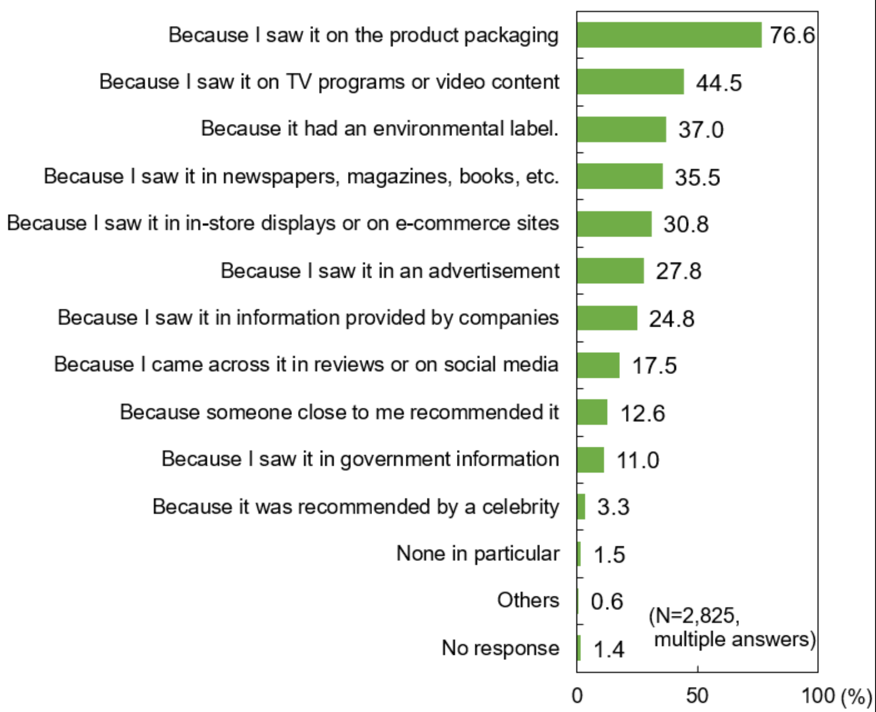
(Note) All the diagrams are prepared based on the “Basic Survey on Consumer Life” (FY2024) of the Consumer Affairs Agency.

(3) Key Factors Considered Important for Encouraging Changes in Consumer Behavior

- ◯ Approximately 80% of respondents became aware of eco-friendly products through product packaging, a higher rate than through information media or environmental labels.
- ◯ Even among those who are highly concerned about environmental issues, only 26.8% choose products with environmental labels.

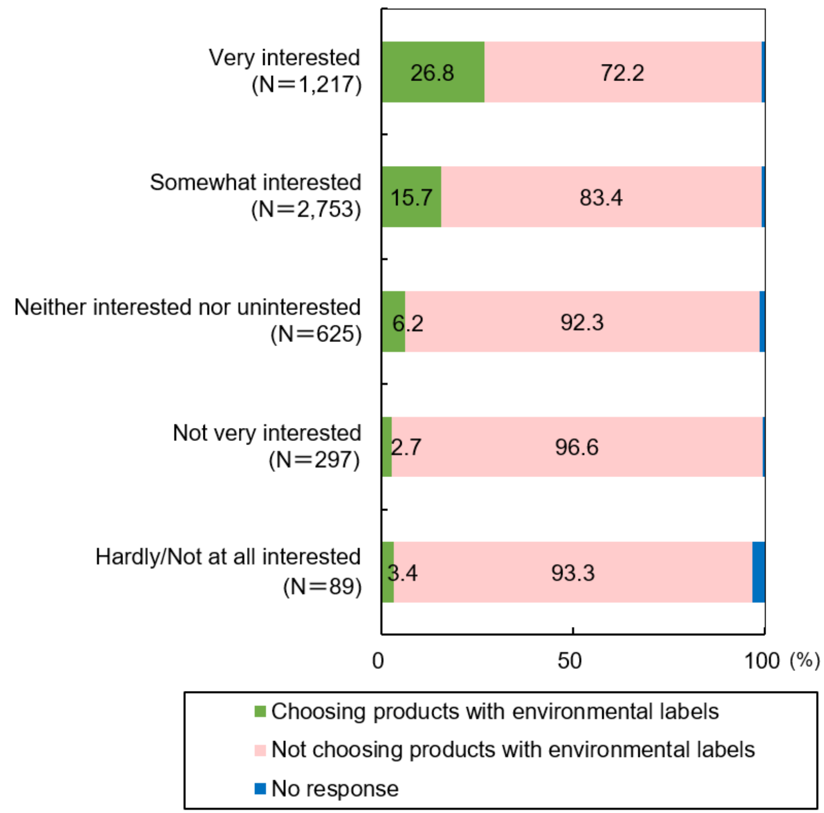
→ **While product labelling plays an important role in promoting environmentally conscious consumer behavior, environmental labels may not be fully recognized by consumers or effectively utilized by businesses.**

Diagram 2-15: How did you first become aware of eco-friendly products?



* In response to the question - 'To what extent do you actively purchase eco-friendly products and services in your daily life?', this question was only asked to those who answered 'not very much' or 'hardly at all or don't know' on a four-point scale.

Diagram 2-16: Relationship between the level of interest in environmental issues and whether to choose products with environmental labels



Examples of environmental labels

"ChoiSTAR"

Unified Energy-saving Label

(Note) All the diagrams are prepared based on the "Basic Survey on Consumer Life" (FY2024) of the Consumer Affairs Agency.

(3) Key Factors Considered Important for Encouraging Changes in Consumer Behavior

- ◯ Only about 10% to 20% of respondents consider the environmental impact when purchasing products, regardless of product category.
- ◯ While “price” and “quality/function” are valued across all product categories, other important factors differ depending on the category.

→ **To encourage environmentally conscious consumer behavior, it is important not only to raise awareness of the need to consider environmental impact and labelling when purchasing products, but also to ensure that product appeal aligns with the characteristics of each item.**

Diagram 2-17: Factors considered when purchasing products

(Note) Prepared based on the “Basic Survey on Consumer Life” (FY2024), Consumer Affairs Agency.

Various topics that require supplementary analysis are introduced as columns.

Environmental awareness among younger generations in the era of social/cultural-oriented consumption

Megumi Ushikubo
President/CEO
Infinity Co., Ltd.

-Contemporary consumer values are shifting toward "social/cultural-oriented consumption," where purchasing behaviors that have a positive impact on society and the self are considered valuable, reflecting the growing importance of meaning and social connections in the age of social media. It is the younger generations, including Generation Z, that place the greatest importance on these values.

-The younger generations exert influence over other age groups through digital technology. With their environmentally conscious values, they have the potential to become key players in shifting society's overall consumer behavior toward more eco-friendly practices. In order to drive a shift in society's overall consumer behavior based on environmental awareness, businesses and society should adopt a consumer-oriented perspective that values enjoyment (empathy), connection, and transparency.

Why are consumers less likely to choose sustainable products?

Miyuri Shirai
Professor
Faculty of Business and Commerce,
Keio University

-Reasons why sustainable products are less likely to be chosen include a lack of familiarity with these products, negative perceptions (e.g., lower quality or added burden), difficulty in incorporating them into daily routines, limited visibility at points of sale, and difficulty distinguishing them from other products.

-In order to promote sustainable products to consumers, it is important to take a variety of approaches, including: 1) clearly conveying what "sustainable" means; 2) creating a shopping environment that raises awareness of sustainability; 3) at times, presenting sustainability information separately from product performance; 4) reinforcing the perception of social impact; 5) delivering messages that align with consumers' mindsets; and 6) helping consumers establish sustainable routines.

To create a market for eco-friendly products

Norichika Kanie
Professor
Graduate School of Media and Governance,
Keio University

-Their higher cost poses a barrier for consumers, limiting the expansion of the market for eco-friendly products. However, products made from recycled materials tend to be priced higher due to technical challenges, such as recycling.

-To overcome the cost barrier, one approach is to present new value propositions that justify the cost, such as being both sustainable and of the highest quality, or to first target wealthy consumers, who tend to be more interested in high-end products, to drive up demand, scale up production, and ultimately lower prices to make the products more affordable to the general public. It is essential to create a market in which ordinary consumers can purchase eco-friendly products without experiencing a sense of financial burden.

Working Team on Green-oriented Consumer Behavior

<Summary Report by the Working Team and Future Direction for Addressing Challenges>

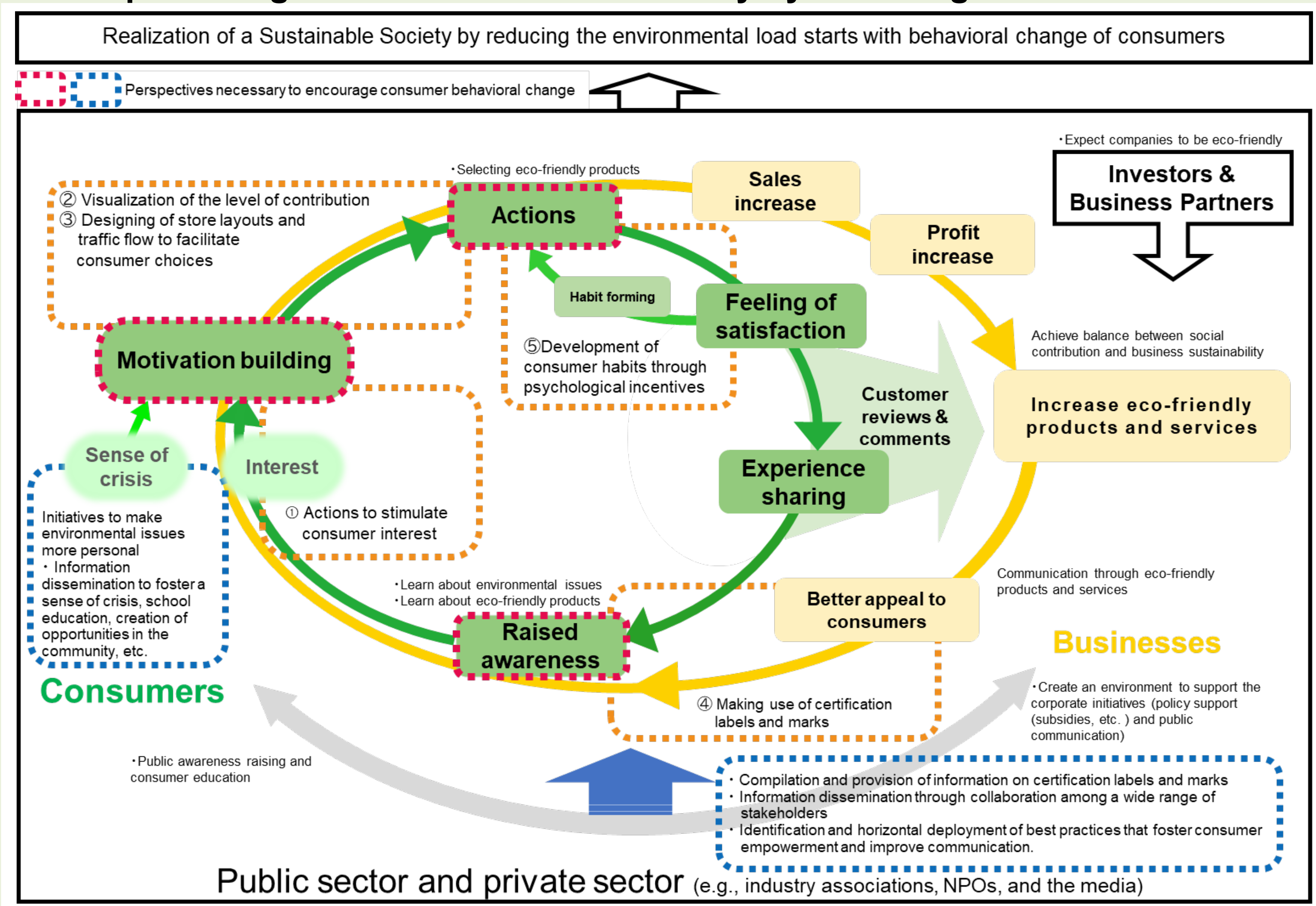
-In November 2024, the Consumer Affairs Agency launched the "**Working Team on Green-oriented Consumer Behavior**" to encourage consumers to adopt more green-oriented consumer behaviors. In February 2025, **the Working Team released a summary report outlining key perspectives necessary to encourage changes in consumer behavior.**

-In this report, the Working Team summarized the current state and background of consumers' environmental awareness and behavior, and identified **key perspectives necessary to drive a shift in consumer behavior**, such as **making environmental issues more personal through sharing an appropriate sense of crisis and problem awareness,**[*1] **and encouraging a change through the design of social, economic, and psychological incentives.**[*2]

-The Working Team also highlighted the **need for collaboration between the administration and various entities,** including government agencies, businesses, trade associations, private sector organizations, and the media, in disseminating accurate information, etc.

***1** In Japan, global environmental issues tend to be seen as concerns for the distant future, highlighting the need to build a shared recognition that prompt action is urgently required.
***2** For example, stimulating consumer interest by designing systems that not only promote environmental friendliness but also structure green-oriented consumption in a way that benefits consumers, such as being interesting, enjoyable, and inspiring participation.

Conceptual Diagram of a Sustainable Society by Reducing Environmental Load



Working Team on Green-oriented Consumer Behavior

<To change our lives and the global environment through consumption>

-**As members of a society with consumer citizenship, consumers are expected** to go beyond simply seeking low prices and convenience, and **to engage in more responsible consumer behavior by considering the background of how products are manufactured and distributed, as well as the impact of their consumption on the economy, society, and the global environment.**

-To encourage environmentally conscious consumer behavior, **it is important for a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies and businesses, to work together to engage with consumers' interests and raise awareness of environmental issues.**

■ The Consumer Affairs Agency has outlined the "**Three Principles for Green-Oriented Consumers**," based on the summary report released by the Working Team on Green-Oriented Consumer Behavior.

■ Taking opportunities such as Consumers' Month in May, the Agency seeks to share a sense of crisis with consumers and to communicate that our daily consumer behavior can change not only our own lives but also the global environment.

Three Principles for "Green-Oriented" Consumers

- Are environmental issues like climate change really problems of the "**distant future**"? Let's think about it.
- Let's find the "**green**" in your daily life.
- **Let's talk about** how your "green" practices **benefit** both **yourself** and **the world**.

Part 2, Chapter 1: Formulation of the 5th Basic Plan for Consumer Policies

- ○ The Cabinet approved the 5th Basic Plan for Consumer Policies in March 2025 that covers five-year period from FY2025 to FY2029.
- ○ The consumer policy outlined in the Plan sets out three goals: ensuring a fair trading environment that consumers can trust, empowering consumers' abilities, and building a society in which no one is left behind.

What is the Basic Plan for Consumer Policies?

- ○ A broad outline for consumer policies that will be pursued on a long-term basis (as provided for in Article 9, the Basic Act on Consumer Policies)
- ○ The planning period of the 5th Basic Plan: From FY2025 to FY2029 (5 years)
- ○ An interim review of the Plan will be conducted around the third year after its adoption, and the initiatives will be subject to constant review.

Key Points in the 5th Basic Plan

In the significantly changing society due to digitalization, population ageing and other factors,

＜Target vision for Society＞	＜Basic measures＞
➢ Ensuring fair and reliable transaction environment for consumers	➢ Identify and take measures against consumer harm in the digital market. ➢ Cooperate with police and other agencies on consumer troubles from using social media etc. ➢ Protect consumers' interests from illegitimate or harmful information.
➢ Empowering consumers' abilities: to recognize risks, refuse suspicious offers, and ask for advice	➢ Promote consumer education ➢ Implement measures to prevent harassment by customers, reduce food loss and waste, etc.
➢ Bring about a society in which no one is left behind	➢ Enhance local consumer administration ➢ Promote local government initiatives for consumer affairs (e.g. Local Council for ensuring the safety of consumers, outreach activities), etc.

For **assured safe and fulfilling consumer lives**

[Reference] Background to the Formulation of the Basic Plan for Consumer Policies

- June 2004 — The Consumer Protection Fundamental Act was revised (Renamed to "Basic Act on Consumer Policies") — [1st Basic Plan] (2005–2009)
- September 2009 — The Consumer Affairs Agency and the Consumer Commission were established — [2nd Basic Plan] (2010–2014)

⋮

[5th Basic Plan] (2025–2029)

Section 1: Preventing consumer harm

1. Ensuring consumer safety
2. Optimizing transactions and product labelling, and ensuring consumer opportunities for independent and reasonable selection
3. Promoting policies that are coordinated among relevant government offices to support vulnerable consumers, etc.
4. Establishing the framework to process consumer complaints and conflict resolution

Section 2: Promotion of economic/social structural reforms through consumer participation in a fair and sustainable society

1. Coordination and cooperation between consumers and business operators to contribute to reducing food loss and waste
2. Coordination and cooperation between consumers and business operators to contribute to environmental conservation
3. Other coordination and cooperation between consumers and business operators to contribute to developing a sustainable consumer society
4. Promotion of efforts to ensure compliance in business activities

Section 3: Practice of "New Lifestyle" Flexible/focused responses to other various issues

1. Practice of "New Lifestyle" and response to consumer issues in the face of disasters
2. Simultaneous realization of protection and promotion of consumer interests in a digital society
3. Response to the globalization of consumer affairs

Section 4: Promotion of consumer education and providing Information to consumers

1. Promotion of consumer education
2. Promotion of awareness-raising activities for consumer policies

Section 5: Establishing the structure to promote consumer administration

1. Reflecting consumer opinions/ensuring consumer policy transparency
2. Establishing national systems
3. Establishing local systems